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AUTHOR MacPhee, David; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Comparing Ute Mountain Indians, Hispanics, and Anglos within several communities, this study examined: (1) ethnic differences in the structure and function of parents' support networks; and (2) the relation of social support to parental feelings of competence and parenting behaviors. From 4 sites in Colorado, 484 parents or guardians of 2- to 5-year-old children were selected from the DARE to Be You prevention project on the basis of various risk factors, including low income, teenage child-bearing, and family history of substance abuse. Subjects were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups, with the experimental group participating in an 8- to 12-week series of parent education workshops and support groups designed to promote self-esteem and positive child-rearing practices. All participants completed a pretest booklet of scales on child development and behavior, child-rearing practices, parental functioning (locus of control, attributions, self-esteem), and background information. The experimental group completed a posttest booklet at the conclusion of the intervention workshops. Analysis revealed that Ute Mountain Indians have social networks governed by frequent interchanges with an interconnected web of kin; Hispanic parents have large, close-knit networks but fewer resources for emotional support; and Anglo parents have structurally diffuse but emotionally supportive networks. (Contains 53 references.) (MM)

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Ethnic Variations in Social Support Networks and Child Rearing

David MacPhee, Janet Fritz, & Jan Miller-Heyl

Colorado State University

DRAFT

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Address correspondence to the authors in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523.

RUNNING HEAD: Ethnic Variations in Support

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Abstract

One concern of socialization theories is how the social ecology influences child-rearing patterns. In particular, how do ethnic groups differ from and resemble each other in their social networks and child rearing? A related issue is the extent to which parental self-esteem is influenced by variations in emotional support. Our sample included 484 low-income parents of ethnically and ecologically diverse backgrounds. They completed a multidimensional hierarchical social map and various measures of parental functioning (self-esteem, child-rearing practices) as part of an intervention program. Consistent with ethnographic evidence, we found Ute Mountain Indians to have social networks governed by frequent interchanges with an interconnected web of kin; Hispanic parents to have large, close-knit networks but a smaller number of resources upon whom they relied for emotional support; and Anglo parents to have structurally diffuse but emotionally supportive networks. Within-group regression analyses, covarying SES, revealed that satisfaction with support, for Anglo parents only, related to parenting. These results indicate that felt support is especially critical to child rearing when support systems are diffuse, and that programs providing support to parents need to consider the social network profile of the participants.

Ethnic Variations in Social Support Networks and Child Rearing

While a body of evidence has been developed which argues for the beneficial effects of social support on parental perceptions of competence and child development outcomes (Crnic, Greenberg, Ragozin, Robinson, & Basham, 1983; Dunst, Trivette, & Cross, 1986; MacPhee, Benson, & Bullock, 1986; Seybold, Fritz, & MacPhee, 1992), there remains a need to examine the issue across different ethnic groups. How do social support patterns relate to parental competence within different ethnic groups? Currently there is insufficient baseline data as to the patterns of parental support within different ethnic communities and how these patterns of support relate to parental self-esteem and child-rearing practices (Acock & Hurlbert, 1990; Whittaker & Tracy, 1991). The present study has two purposes: to describe ethnic differences in the structure and function of parents' support networks, and to determine how social support relates to parental feelings of competence and parenting behaviors.

A tradition of conducting cross-cultural work on child-rearing patterns (e.g., Bornstein, 1991; Whiting, 1963) exists that is not mirrored by work with various ethnic groups in the United States, especially among Native Americans. Wasserman, Rauh, Brunelli, Garcia-Castro, and Necos (1990) argued that research on acculturation has focused more on adult mental health, rather than on parenting practices and child developmental processes. Families who are experiencing significant stress function better if social supports are available (Friedrich, Wilturner, & Cohen, 1985), but "Culture forms the context in which stressful life events derive meaning--there are culturally patterned ways of viewing and responding to stressor stimuli" (Smith, 1985). A better understanding of how the social networks of primary caregivers in high-risk families are used to cope with the challenges of

parenting within different ethnic groups is needed if we are to be successful in designing effective family intervention programs. The present study will compare three ethnic groups, Ute Mountain Indians, Hispanics, and Anglos within several communities. Unknown is whether social support is differentially related, in these various ethnic groups, to parental self-esteem and child-rearing practices.

In determining how social support relates to child-rearing within these ethnic communities, our approach has been grounded in two traditions. First, self-esteem theories accord support a central role (Bandura, 1989; Harter, 1983). The second tradition, social ecology, has generated extensive research linking social support, including neighborhood characteristics (Garbarino & Sherman, 1980), to child development (Cochran & Brassard, 1976) and parenting (Belsky, 1984; Weiss & Jacobs, 1988). Such grounding reflects a multidimensional approach in considering extrafamilial stressors and supports as influences on parental feelings of competence and parent-child interactions. According to Belsky (1984), the three factors most influential in shaping parenting behavior are the parents' psychological well-being, the contextual subsystems of support, and the characteristics of the child. He further argues that these three factors need to be assessed simultaneously.

The parent's sense of well-being includes the pivotal aspect of self-esteem in and satisfaction with the parenting role. Given that one's self-worth is largely influenced through interactions with others (Bandura, 1989; Harter, 1983) the support a parent receives should strongly influence one's sense of parental competence. Network support outside the home can prove to be a strong influence on maternal beliefs and expectations about child-rearing (Cotterell, 1986). Both Harter and Bandura argue that people develop domain-specific beliefs about their competencies which guides behavior and also constrains how new

information is evaluated (Grusec, 1992). Information gained from support networks will be filtered through, as well as help shape, self-efficacy beliefs.

Another type of information generated by support networks are attitudes and values about help-seeking. Cultures differing in these values might differ in use of support programs (Golding & Wells, 1990). Native Americans, especially those living in reservation communities, rely heavily on extended family networks to support their parenting efforts (Lynch & Hanson, 1992). Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, and Perez-Stable (1987) point out that the aspect of "familialism" least affected by acculturation among Hispanics is the support received and expected from relatives. Social networks transmit attitudes and values about help-seeking which may influence the use of formal and informal systems of support by families (Golding & Wells, 1990). Would the expectations of support to be received by kin by Hispanics decrease the degree of support sought through non-family or formal networks? Such differences should be linked to differences in what influences well-being. Stress may result in Native Americans or Hispanics turning to extended kinship networks, whereas Anglos may turn to professionals more readily because of transmitted values of independence and parental responsibilities. There may be an important interaction of ethnic values and cultural context that would have meaning to the development of effective family support programs. This study endeavors to compare the linkages between social support networks and parenting efforts between groups holding different ethnic values and traditions.

Method

Sample

The 484 participants, all of whom were parents or guardians of 2-5 year olds, were selected for the DARE to Be You prevention project on the basis of various risk factors,

including low income, teenage child-bearing, and family history of substance abuse. Subjects were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups, with the experimental group participating in an 8-12 week series of parent education workshops and support groups designed to promote self-esteem and positive child-rearing practices. The long-term goal was to increase the children's ability to resist involvement with illicit substances.

The four sites in Colorado differ markedly in their social ecology; they were selected in an effort to test the replicability of our intervention program. Even though this paper focuses on ethnic variations in social support, it must be emphasized that ethnicity is confounded with site ($\underline{X}^2(6)=400.00$, $\underline{p} < .00001$), making it difficult to parse ethnic differences from the larger ecological context of geography and population density. These sites and their predominant ethnic groups are described below.

Ute Mountain Indian (Towaoc). This reservation site is isolated by geography--it is 250 miles to the nearest city of 25,000 or more--and prejudice in the surrounding communities. Social indicators document the high-risk nature of this population: 75% of students have dropped out of school, 75% of the high school students have substance abuse problems, 98% of community deaths involve alcohol or other drugs, and the average life expectancy is 37.8 years. There is a 78% unemployment rate, and 50% of children under the age of three are reared by teenage parents.

Strong family networks are a primary resource, however. Utes are like many Native American family systems in that they have close kinship networks (see Niethammer, 1977; Swinomish, 1991). Often, infants are reared by grandparents or uncles and aunts, in a separate home, who are not only nurturers but disciplinarians and teachers as well. At various times throughout childhood, youth may live with different family members. Third or even fifth degree relatives are often recognized as members of one's family, depending on

many social factors. Child-rearing practices tend to be child-centered and communal, with an emphasis on vicarious learning through imitation and listening to elders' teachings, praise and reward for good behavior, and shaming for misbehavior. Spanking is generally avoided because it is thought to make children timid and less independent and self-reliant. Most (80%) of the Native Americans in our sample were from the Ute Mountain reservation.

Hispanic (San Luis Valley). This isolated agricultural basin, with less than five people per square mile, is surrounded by three mountain ranges of 14,000' peaks. It was settled by Mexican immigrants; 43% of the populace is Hispanic, and 67% of the Hispanic parents in our sample live in this area. It is an economically depressed region, with an unemployment rate of 24%, the lowest per capita income in Colorado, and a high rate of farm foreclosures. Nearly 10% of pregnant women receive inadequate or no prenatal care; rates of teen pregnancy, child abuse and DUI filings are in the top decile for Colorado; and only 35% of the Valley Hispanics are high school graduates, compared to 78.6% for the state.

Research on the support systems and interpersonal values of Hispanics reveals two core characteristics. The first feature is familism, which is a sense of obligation to the family and a high level of perceived support from relatives (Sabogal et al., 1987). A number of studies have found that Hispanics, relative to Anglos, have large, close-knit kinship networks, and that they depend upon a select few of these resources for emotional support (see Keefe, Padilla, & Carlos, 1979). Others have found that differences in kinship support disappear when controlling for education and SES, although Anglos still are more likely to turn to friends for emotional support (Vernon & Roberts, 1985). Variations in child-rearing practices also appear to be governed as much by social class as ethnicity (Martinez, 1988). Another core characteristic, described by Triandis, Marin, Lisansky, and Betancourt (1984) as the simpatia script, is the value placed on positive interpersonal relationships, as opposed

to competitive or assertive interactions. This script may discourage reliance on non-Hispanic resources if there are cultural differences in how assistance is perceived.

Anglo (Montezuma, Colorado Springs). Most of the Anglos in our sample were recruited from Montezuma County (53%), a semi-rural area in the southwestern high desert, or Colorado Springs (28%), an urban area of 281,000. Like the San Luis Valley, Montezuma County has high rates of unemployment (12%) and poverty (7.8%), which contribute to higher-than-average rates of substance abuse and child abuse. Over 90% of the high school population comes from substance abusing or dysfunctional families, and 30-40% of the student body are teen parents. Few services are available for low-income families: only one licensed infant daycare serving six; no prenatal parenting classes; few mental health or addictions programs, especially for parents; and no follow-up support programs for teen parents. In contrast, Colorado Springs provides much greater access to support services for parents. However, recent in-migrations and polarization along SES lines have eroded the sense of community, suggesting that these parents may feel the most isolated.

Although sample sizes vary due to missing data, this paper focuses on the 358 parents on whom we had ethnicity and social support data. Included were 75 Hispanics, 117 Ute Indians, and 166 Anglos. Sixteen parents from other ethnic groups were excluded. As the sociodemographic data in Table 1 show, these are low-SES families, although the Anglos are generally more advantaged (tests for ethnic differences follow). The typical parents work as unskilled laborers or service workers; the median family income is $12,500 per year, or at poverty level ($F(2,258)=6.05$, $p = .003$); 44% receive some form of welfare ($X^2(2)=12.2$, $p=.002$); and 21% of the Anglos are high school dropouts, compared to 34% of the Hispanics and 37% of the Utes ($X^2(2)=7.77$, $p=.02$). The Anglo parents also had attained significantly more education (range of 3-22; $F > 9.12$, $p < .0002$). Many (33%) had their

first child as a teenager, although the average age at entry into the program was 29 years for the mothers ($F(2,303)=6.20$, $p=.002$) and 32 years for the fathers ($F(2,207)=4.86$, $p=.001$). There were significant differences in marital status ($X^2(12)=42.8$, $p<.0001$), with 31% of the Utes and 17% of the Hispanics being single parents. Related to mental health issues, nearly half (42% to 53%) reported that relatives, by blood or marriage, have a drinking problem; 11% of the Utes but less than 3% of the other groups had children placed in foster care within the past year ($X^2(2)=11.4$, $p=.02$); and more of the Anglos had sought help for individual or family therapy within the past 6 months ($X^2(2)=8.70$, $p=.01$), likely due to both access and cultural differences in help-seeking.

Insert Table 1 here

Measures

Social Network Questionnaire (SNQ). The SNQ is a hierarchical social map (see Antonucci, 1986) that asks respondents to place members of their social network into one of three concentric circles, ranging from 3 (so close it is hard to imagine life without them) to 1 (less close but still important). Although some participants identified as many as 40 resources in their network, we coded no more than 20 for Network Size (one-year stability $r = .77$). Intimacy was defined as closeness averaged over Network Size (stability $r = .47$). For each person listed in the hierarchical map, parents then noted (a) which of ten functions the person fulfilled, (b) the relationship of that person to the respondent, and (c) how much contact the parent had with the person, from 1 (about once a year) to 5 (every day). Factor analysis suggested two composite variables based on the percentage of the network providing each function: Emotional Support consists of being a confidant in times of need (3 items) and providing reassurance, respect, and care (alpha = .84); Instrumental Support consists of 3

items related to child care plus someone who would loan money (alpha = .73). Contact, averaged over network members, had a modest alpha reliability (r = .69) and one-year stability (r = .61).

Subjects also completed six yes/no items assessing satisfaction with various aspects of support, such as wanting more people in their network or in whom to confide. The composite score, Satisfaction (alpha = .80; stability r = .71), could range from 6 to 12; the negatively skewed distribution (M=8.03) indicates some dissatisfaction with these parents' support systems. Finally, a molar item, Enmeshment (stability r = .66), served as an index of whether the network was closely knit. Respondents estimated how many people in their support network knew each other, from 1 (none) to 4 (all).

Levitt and her colleagues (Levitt, 1991; Levitt, Weber, & Clark, 1986) have documented relations between the SNQ, especially emotional support, and various measures of well-being, and have found structural changes in adolescents' networks that replicate prior research on their peer relations. More central to the present study, Levitt has also found consistent ethnic differences in children's sources of support, and that the SNQ is valid across social class and ethnic groups.

Child-rearing practices. We used two self-report measures to assesses patterns of child rearing: the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (Gerard, in press), and a series of Likert-type items on use of various disciplinary practices. The PCRI short form consists of 55 items, each rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), on five scales. We focused on three composites derived from factor analyses: Positive Attitudes toward Parenting, consisting of 15 items assessing satisfaction with the parental role, child-centered communication, and acceptance of the child; Control, with 14 items assessing aspects of coercive interactions (e.g., child defiance, parent anger, inconsistent limit setting); and

Maturational Orientation, which has 11 items related to being permissive and protective versus encouraging independence. Scale scores were reversed when necessary so that high scores represent more positive attributes, such as consistent, firm control. Both alpha (r = .80-.89) and test-retest (r = .76-.92) reliabilities are high. Regarding validity, the PCRI scales are uncorrelated with social desirability, are sensitive to the effects of parent education, and correlate with other measures of self-esteem and child-rearing practices.

We have also used, in local program evaluations, a set of questions that ask parents how often they use 12 child-rearing practices, such as time out, spanking, reasoning, and criticizing. Each strategy includes concrete examples, to ensure uniformity of interpretation. Factor analyses consistently yield a cluster of punitive practices (Harsh Punishment), with alpha reliabilities of .75-.81 and a retest coefficient of .61; and a smaller cluster (Rational Guidance; alpha = .64) consisting of time out, giving choices, reasoning, and praise. In terms of validity, feelings of parental competence and the amount of prior caregiving experience are negatively correlated with Harsh Punishment, and both measures are sensitive to the effects of intervention. However, convergent validity has been difficult to demonstrate, perhaps because these items are more subject to social desirability biases.

Parental self-esteem. The Self-Perceptions of the Parental Role (SPPR) is a 22-item scale measuring various components of parental self-esteem (MacPhee, Benson, & Bullock, 1986). We used the two scales that were of greatest relevance to the purpose of the program, and that had the highest reliabilities: Competence (6 items; possible range of 6-30), or confidence in one's skill as a parent; and Satisfaction (5 items; range of 5-25) with the parental role versus feelings of regret and resentment. Each item includes two contrasting statements, such as "Some parents often worry about how they're doing as a parent BUT Other parents feel confident about their parenting abilities." Parents then endorse the

statement that best represents their feelings, checking either sort of true for me or really true for me. MacPhee and colleagues (e.g., MacPhee, et al., 1986; Seybold, Fritz, & MacPhee, 1991) have found the SPPR to have high internal (r = .78-.87) and test-retest (r = .80-.88) reliabilities, convergent and factorial validity, and construct validity in terms of relations to difficult child behavior, punitive child-rearing practices, social support, and sensitivity to intervention.

Procedure

All participants completed a pretest booklet of scales on child development and behavior, child-rearing practices, parental functioning (i.e., locus of control, attributions, self-esteem), and background information. These were group-administered orally because of concerns about readability, and cultural differences in how some items were interpreted. The experimental group completed the posttest booklet at the conclusion of the workshops, and both experimental and control groups completed follow-ups at yearly intervals thereafter. The SNQ was completed prior to the unit on building support systems, in the third session, and at yearly intervals thereafter.

Results

The first issue we examined is whether support networks are multidimensional in nature. With few exceptions, the correlations among the social support variables were less than .20. For the combined group at the pretest, variables reflecting the degree to which networks are tightly knit were interrelated (rs = .14-.29, $p < .002$): how many network members know each other, the frequency of contact with people in the network, and perceived closeness ("Intimacy"). Those who listed more people in their support networks reported that a smaller percentage of them provided emotional (r = -.28, $p < .0001$) and instrumental support (r = -.23, $p < .0001$), suggesting that individuals with large networks

rely on select individuals to meet specific needs. Finally, satisfaction with levels of support, in this sample of parents, was most strongly related the availability of child care (r = .32, p < .0001) and to Intimacy (r = .15, p = .004).

Ethnic Differences in Support and Child Rearing

The next set of analyses focuses on ethnic differences in the structure and function of social support networks, and in child rearing. Given the consistent differences in SES favoring the Anglos in this sample, and the fact that ethnic differences in support often vanish when SES variables are controlled (Vernon & Roberts, 1985), we covaried maternal education and family income in each series of ANOVAs. With regard to the functional aspects of support, the main effect for ethnicity on Emotional Support was significant ($F(2,326)=4.84$, $p=.01$) yet the covariate was not. Duncan multiple range tests indicated that Anglos had a significantly higher percentage of their network providing emotional support, relative to Hispanic parents (see Table 2). No significant differences emerged on Instrumental Support nor on Satisfaction with Support, but there was a trend on Intimacy ($F(2,334)=2.58$, $p=.077$) that disappeared when the covariates were included. Two of the three structural variables differed by ethnicity, even after covarying SES: Contact ($F(2,330)=9.23$, $p < .0001$) and Enmeshment ($F(2,316)=7.16$, $p<.0001$) but not Network Size. Duncan multiple range tests showed that Ute Mountain Indians had the most frequent contact with members of their support system while Anglos had the least, and both the Utes and Hispanics had more closely knit networks than did the Anglos. Thus, the structural variables suggest that Anglos are more isolated, or at least have networks which are not as tightly knit, yet the function variables show that a higher percentage of their networks provides emotional support. In comparison, the Ute Mountain parents are similar to Anglos

in emotional support, but belong to much more close-knit networks in terms of subjective closeness to and frequent contact with members, and how many people know each other.

The composite variables Emotional Support and Instrumental Support may obscure meaningful differences in perceived support across specific functions, so we conducted an ANCOVA with Function as a within-subjects factor and Ethnicity as the between-subjects factor. The main effect for ethnicity was not significant ($F(2,326)=2.36$, $p = .10$), but both the main effect for Function ($F(9,2934)=45.14$, $p < .0001$) and the Function by Ethnicity interaction effect ($F(18,2088)=2.99$, $p < .0001$) were. The Function main effect was due to a higher percentage of the network providing emotional support--such as someone in whom to confide (30%), and providing respect (35.4%) and reassurance (28.4%)--as compared to advice about major decisions (19%) and instrumental support related to child care (18% to 21.8%). The interaction effect was due to two predominant patterns: Anglos received more emotional support in the form of people in whom to confide, talk to if upset, and provide reassurance; and Hispanic parents had a higher percentage of available babysitters yet fewer people upon whom they relied for advice with major decisions and child rearing, and whom they respected.

Turning to differences in parental functioning, Ute Mountain parents were significantly less satisfied with the parental role ($F(2,404)=11.33$, $p < .00001$) yet the two other measures of parental self-esteem did not vary with ethnicity (see Table 2). Of the four measures of child-rearing practices, ethnic differences appeared on Maturational Orientation ($F(2,413)=14.40$, $p<.0001$) and on Harsh Punishment ($F(2,288)=6.41$, $p=.002$), even after covarying SES. Anglo parents had the highest scores on Maturational Orientation, indicating that they were more encouraging of independence, whereas the Ute Mountain parents had significantly lower scores, in the direction of indulgence. Consistent with ethnographic

reports, Ute Mountain parents were least likely to use punishment whereas Hispanic parents were most likely to use spanking, scolding, threats, or criticism.

Insert Table 2 here

Relations Among Support and Child Rearing

The cultural difference model often is criticized for its implication that minority groups are deficient (Azibo, 1988). An alternative is to conduct with within-group correlational analyses, which may show that variables operate differently across ethnic groups (cf. Luster & Dubow, 1990). Thus, we examined the extent to which social networks variables explained variance in parent self-esteem and child-rearing practices, within each ethnic group.

The pattern of correlations among the network variables was fairly consistent across the three ethnic groups, with two exceptions. First, satisfaction with support was related to different variables for each ethnic group (all $p < .05$): to size of the network for Hispanics ($r = .22$); to frequency of contact with network members ($r = .24$) and emotional support ($r = .23$) for Utes; and to degree of intimacy for Anglos ($r = .22$). Second, frequency of contact and Intimacy were significantly correlated for Utes ($r = .36$) but not for the other two groups. These two findings suggest that the affective valence attached to support networks is especially influenced by structural features among Ute Indians, and by perceived intimacy among Anglos.

Regression analyses for the combined sample revealed small ($R^2 = .075$ to $.182$) but significant ($p > .013$) relations between the support variables and all of the child rearing variables except Positive Attitude and Rational Guidance. The only significant beta weights, however, were for ethnicity as related to Satisfaction with the parental role and Maturational

Orientation; and for Satisfaction with Support. Forced entry regressions within each ethnic group were more revealing. In each regression, maternal education was first entered as a covariate, followed by the block of functional variables (including Satisfaction with Support), with the structural variables entered in the final step. This order was guided by research indicating that emotional support is especially important to self-esteem and competent child rearing. Explained variance in parental self-esteem (Table 3) and child-rearing practices (Table 4) was consistently greater in the sample of Ute Mountain parents, but because of maternal education not social support. Among Anglo parents, only Satisfaction with Support was consistently related to parent functioning whereas none of the predictor variables were related to child rearing among Hispanic parents. Thus, combining ethnic groups obscures meaningful differences in how SES and social network variables operate. One important example is the relation between Emotional Support and Harsh Punishment, which were negatively correlated among Utes (r=-.24, p=.058) and Anglos (r=-.25, p=.006) but positively correlated among Hispanics (r=.30, p=.033).

Insert Tables 3 and 4 here

Given theoretical arguments that emotional support is essential to self-esteem, the lack of correlation between the two constructs is striking. For the combined groups, Emotional Support and Intimacy were essentially unrelated to the three measures of parent self-esteem (rs = .04 to .15). The correlations involving Satisfaction with Support were somewhat stronger: r=.25 ($p < .0001$) with Competence, and r=.27 ($p < .0001$) with Satisfaction.

Intervention Effects on Support Systems

The final issue we examined is whether a support program for parents modified their social networks. Since inadequate emotional support or lack of access to formal resources is

a common risk condition for these families, it was expected that one outcome of the intervention program would be to increase perceived support. Three groups were compared in a series of repeated-measures MANOVAs: no-treatment controls; parents in an education-only group, who completed workshops on effective discipline, esteem enhancement, and building support systems; and an experimental group who took part in "booster" group support activites in the years following the educational intervention. Neither group differences nor time effects were observed for Emotional Support, Instrumental Support, Intimacy, and Network Size. However, Contact increased significantly with time for all groups ($F(2,180)=9.87$, $p=.002$). Group by Time interactions, but not main effects, were observed on Satisfaction with Support ($F(2,174)=9.07$, $p < .0001$), with the education-only group increasing; and on Enmeshment ($F(2,165)=4.36$, $p=.01$), with the education/support group becoming increasing interconnected.

For the most part, these results suggest that the intervention program did not have a pervasive effect on social networks. Process evaluations of the intervention program corroborate this conclusion. At the completion of the workshop series and again at the yearly booster sessions, participants completed Likert-type questions about the group dynamics, how much they had benefitted, and what they liked and would change about the program. Parents who had greater needs for social support at entry into the program were expected to have more positive process evaluations, because of the opportunity to receive intensive support in a safe environment. In open-ended comments, 52% of the parents mentioned some aspect of social support in the groups as the best part of the program, yet there was no consistent relation between initial levels of support and subjective benefits. As well, parents who on open-ended evaluations noted that social support was the most positive

feature of the program did not differ in initial levels of support nor were there differential changes in their networks.

Discussion

The central aims of this study were to describe ethnic differences in social networks and parenting, and to determine whether variations in social support relate to parental self-esteem and child-rearing practices within three difference ethnic groups. With regard to the first issue, our results consistently replicate ethnographic descriptions of Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo social networks and child-rearing patterns. The Ute Mountain Indians had a close-knit social system consisting of more frequent contact with network members, more members who knew each other, and higher levels of closeness to members. As well, Utes who had more frequent contact with network members also felt closer to them, and they were more satisfied with their existing support system. Thus, their social network appears to be governed by frequent interchanges with an interconnected web of kin. In addition, our survey results replicate prior observations that Native Americans are less punitive and more indulgent that other ethnic groups.

The low-income Anglo parents in this study had more network members who provided emotional support, typically involving talking with friends, yet structurally their networks were more diffuse in terms of the amount of contact and how many members know each other. These differences may reflect geographic mobility, the social ecology of more populous areas, or a consistent Anglo preference to turn to different friends for emotional support (Vernon & Roberts, 1985). We also replicated prior findings that Hispanics have large, close-knit networks, but that they depend on a select few of these resources for emotional support (Keefe et al., 1979). In fact, these Hispanic parents, with the largest network size, had a smaller percentage of members whom they respected and to whom they

turned for advice. Yet, they also had more babysitters at their disposal, perhaps as a byproduct of family obligation (Sabogal et al., 1987).

The hypothesized relation between social support and parenting, especially self-esteem, received meager support. Although a number of support variables were correlated with parenting among the Utes, these were rendered nonsignificant after taking into account variations in maternal education. The only support variable to be consistently related to parenting was satisfaction with current levels of support, which was most prominent as a predictor for the Anglo parents. These findings are broadly at odds with self-esteem theories, yet satisfaction with support is consistently correlated with parental self-esteem (e.g., MacPhee et al., 1986; Seybold et al., 1991). One interpretation is that how many network members provide emotional support is less crucial than whether it meets the individual's needs (Unger & Powell, 1980; Vaux & Athanassopulou, 1987). It is likely that a small number of close kin and a sense of mutual obligation, for Hispanic families, or frequent contact with network members, for Native Americans, provide sufficient emotional support to buffer stressful circumstances. Our measure of satisfaction with support is the only variable that assays unmet needs, and thus it may be an especially sensitive risk indicator for parents, like our Anglo sample, whose networks are more diffuse and fluid.

These results also have implications for prevention programs. It has been repeatedly observed that service providers must consider the social ecology of the target population by taking into account values, communication patterns, and social networks (Lynch & Hanson, 1992; Schorr, 1988). Our findings suggest that programs for Native American families will be most effective if they target entire, intact networks, perhaps by working through tribal elders. Olds' (1986) approach may be more appropriate for Hispanic parents, wherein support services and parent education are directed to grandmother-mother dyads. Finally,

Anglos may benefit most from building support networks as part of an intervention program, given the more diffuse nature of their networks, the relation between intimacy and satisfaction with support, the relation of support satisfaction to parenting. These guidelines further underscore the need to conduct within-group analyses when examining ethnic variations in child rearing, and to tailor support programs to the specific ecologies of human development.

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Table 1

Sociodemographic Characteristics, by Ethnicity

		Ute Indian (n=136)	Hispanic (n= 93)	Anglo (n=188)
Education:	Mother	12.00 (1.60)	12.31 (1.58)	13.21 (2.01)
	Father	12.34 (1.08)	11.82 (2.87)	12.57 (2.44)
Age:	Mother	29.29 (6.45)	27.25 (4.56)	30.13 (5.34)
	Father	31.00 (6.88)	29.39 (6.30)	32.83 (6.46)
Age at First Birth		22.12 (4.12)	20.77 (4.07)	23.06 (4.69)
Married or Cohabiting		51%	60%	73%
Number of Children		2.33 (1.14)	2.45 (1.22)	2.34 (1.06)
Youngest Child's Age		3.74 (3.92)	4.66 (4.71)	4.00 (3.25)
Duncan SEI[1]:	Mother	29.64 (12.35)	27.00 (13.25)	30.68 (14.96)
	Father	26.24 (13.93)	24.63 (14.48)	29.14 (16.47)
Annual Family Income		$13,941	$14,574	$19,062
Receiving Welfare		56%	53%	35%
Agency Help[2]:	Parenting	17%	11%	18%
	Therapy	7%	13%	20%

1 The Duncan SEI is a measure of occupational prestige; scores can range from 11 to 88.

2 At intake, parents were asked whether they had sought advice or help from any of six types of support services in the preceding 6 months.

Table 2

Ethnic Differences in Social Support Networks and Child Rearing

	Ute Indian	Hispanic	Anglo
		Social Support Networks	
Provide Emotional Support	27.94% (17.47)	24.42%$_a$ (11.52)	30.48%$_b$ (13.93)
Provide Instrumental Support	22.15% (12.89)	22.84% (10.61)	23.21% (12.43)
Intimacy	2.36 (.37)	2.28 (.33)	2.26 (.29)
Satisfaction	8.22 (1.99)	7.81 (2.01)	7.92 (2.06)
Network Size	14.89 (3.85)	15.36 (4.03)	15.04 (4.50)
Contact	4.13$_a$ (.56)	3.88$_b$ (.57)	3.68$_c$ (.59)
Enmeshment	3.41$_a$ (.71)	3.35$_a$ (.64)	3.02$_b$ (.63)
		Child Rearing	
Positive Attitude	47.60 (6.42)	49.08 (5.38)	47.63 (5.33)
Competence	20.82 (4.51)	20.80 (4.80)	20.41 (5.09)
Satisfaction	19.06$_b$ (3.44)	20.60$_a$ (3.17)	20.92$_a$ (3.77)
Maturat. Orientation	28.55$_c$ (3.67)	29.55$_b$ (2.84)	31.47$_a$ (2.87)
Control	37.33 (5.57)	37.86 (5.73)	37.86 (5.78)
Harsh Punishment	12.86$_c$ (3.18)	14.99$_a$ (3.13)	13.76$_b$ (2.88)
Rational Guidance	12.14 (1.69)	12.46 (1.45)	12.57 (1.50)

Note. ´ Subscripts indicate significantly different means, with Duncan Multiple Range tests.

Table 3

Relation of Social Network Variables to Parental Self-Esteem, by Ethnicity

Predictor	Ute Indian	Hispanic	Anglo
	Criterion = Parental Competence		
Maternal Education	.30*	.05	.02
Emotional Support	.10	-.13	.08
Instrumental Support	-.08	.16	-.01
Satisfaction w/ Support	.12	.16	.24**
Network Size	.03	.02	.03
Contact	.13	.10	.01
Enmeshment	.27*	-.16	-.03
R^2	.236*	.094	.072
	Criterion = Parental Satisfaction		
Maternal Education	.37*	-.02	-.01
Emotional Support	.21	.11	-.02
Instrumental Support	-.13	.18	.08
Satisfaction w/ Support	.17	.15	.29***
Network Size	-.01	.20	.02
Contact	-.01	-.12	.08
Enmeshment	.15	.19	-.04
R^2	.254**	.159	.104*

Note. Forced entry regressions were used; partial correlations are given in the columns.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .005$

Table 4

Relation of Social Network Variables to Child-Rearing Patterns, by Ethnicity

Predictor	Ute Indian	Hispanic	Anglo
	Criterion = PCRI Control		
Maternal Education	.18	.01	.06
Emotional Support	.22	-.01	.08
Instrumental Support	-.09	.09	.08
Satisfaction w/ Support	.36***	.18	.33***
Network Size	.01	-.08	-.10
Contact	.10	-.23	.08
Enmeshment	.08	.06	-.15
R^2	.293***	.111	.180***
	Criterion = PCRI Matur. Orientation		
Maternal Education	.27*	.02	.01
Emotional Support	-.08	.07	.18*
Instrumental Support	.20	.14	-.09
Satisfaction w/ Support	.01	-.10	.09
Network Size	-.17	-.09	.14
Contact	-.20	-.08	.04
Enmeshment	.09	.06	-.11
R^2	.220*	.073	.068

Table 4 (continued)

		Criterion = Harsh Punishment	
Maternal Education	.01	.13	-.11
Emotional Support	-.12	.36*	-.13
Instrumental Support	.00	-.19	-.01
Satisfaction w/ Support	.03	-.14	-.31***
Network Size	.10	.13	.14
Contact	-.03	-.13	.14
Enmeshment	-.13	.09	.08
R^2	.078	.174	.184***
		Criterion = Rational Guidance	
Maternal Education	-.03	-.16	.13
Emotional Support	-.15	-.11	-.08
Instrumental Support	.13	.25	-.06
Satisfaction w/ Support	-.13	-.06	.07
Intimacy	-.26	.10	.04
Network Size	-.25	.11	-.11
Contact	.05	.12	-.14
Enmeshment	.00	.11	-.14
R^2	.180	.128	.100

Note. Forced entry regressions were used; partial correlations are given in the columns.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .005$